



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

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For Immediate Release

Stephanie Marquis, Communications Director, (608) 266-1683

Public Health Advisory: Protect Yourself from the Heat

MADISON – State health officials are reminding everyone in Wisconsin to protect themselves from heat-related illness and other health risks associated with hot weather. The National Weather Service is forecasting temperatures in the 80s to mid 90s along with high humidity for the upcoming weekend, so be on the lookout for the signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and stroke.

“We are asking everyone to take precautions to avoid heat exhaustion, and to check on their family, friends, and neighbors who may be especially vulnerable to extreme heat,” said Sheri Johnson, State Health Officer. “Young children, seniors, those who are obese and people with chronic medical conditions have the most difficulty in regulating their body temperature and should be watched closely.”

To protect yourself and your family during hot weather:

- Drink more water during hot weather to avoid dehydration. Rapid weight loss of two pounds or more may be a sign of dehydration.
- Spend the hottest part of the day (10 a.m. – 2 p.m.) in a cool, preferably air-conditioned place. If you do not have air conditioning in your home, try to get to a location that does such as a public library, community center, or a shopping mall.
- Use fans to increase ventilation. When the temperature reaches 90° or above, fans may become ineffective in reducing heat-related illness, so be sure to cool your body temperature.
- Take a cool shower or bath to reduce your body temperature. Sponge baths and wet clothing can also cool the body.
- Do not leave anyone -- especially infants, children or pets -- unattended in cars. The temperature inside a car can rise to life-threatening levels in a matter of minutes, even with windows cracked open.
- Make frequent checks on the status of elderly or ill relatives or neighbors. If necessary, move them to an air-conditioned environment during the hottest part of the day.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the hottest part of the day. If such activity is unavoidable, drink plenty of fluids and take frequent breaks in air-conditioned or shaded areas. Consider monitoring your body weight and oral temperature. A weight loss of more than 2 lbs. or an oral temperature above 99° F is cause for concern.
- Avoid alcohol consumption because alcohol dehydrates the body.

Heat Exhaustion

General symptoms of heat exhaustion include fainting, rash, fatigue, nausea, and the skin may become clammy and moist or hot and dry. If these symptoms appear, take immediate actions to reduce body temperature. The recommendations above should be adequate to relieve mild symptoms.

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Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is more severe than heat exhaustion. If someone is experiencing symptoms such as dizziness, weakness, and fatigue, these are early warning signs of heat stroke that should not be ignored. The onset of heat stroke can be rapid and may progress to life-threatening illness within minutes. Serious cases require emergency medical care, so contact your health care provider or dial 9-1-1 if symptoms are severe.

For more information on heat related health concerns, visit the DHFS web site at:

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/InjuryPrevention/Disaster/Heat.htm>

You can also visit the Hot Weather Health Emergencies web site maintained by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/>

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